



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
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FOUNDER
Mrs. Sybil Brand

CHAIRPERSON
Mrs. Eleanor R. Montañó

VICE CHAIRPERSON
Mrs. Helen H. Stathatos

Mr. Frank S. Bacio
Mr. Vito Cannella
Ms. Rita Hall
Mr. John A. Hammargren
Mr. Carl E. Moore

MINUTES OF THE SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS REGULAR WEEKLY MEETING APRIL 30, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Montañó called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Chair Montañó led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Chair Eleanor R. Montañó
Vice Chair Helen H. Stathatos
Frank Bacio
Vito Cannella
Rita Hall
John A. Hammargren
Carl E. Moore

Staff

Sandra Barbee, Head, Commission Services
Janice Davis, Commission Services Staff
Andrew Sevrin, Commission Services Staff
Garen Khachian, Commission Services Staff

Invited Guests

John Franklin, Sheriff's Department
Paul McIver, Department of Mental Health
Jim Nettles, Community Care Licensing
Walter Chan, Department of Children & Family Services

Elizabeth Howard, Department of Children & Family Services
Dorothy Channel, Department of Children & Family Services
Susan Jakubowski, Department of Children & Family Services
Trula Worthy-Clayton, Commission of Children and Families
Michael Cooper, Department of Probation

APPROVAL OF APRIL 23, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Hammargren, seconded by Commissioner Bacio, and unanimously carried, the minutes of April 23, 2008 were approved with no changes.

CHAIR'S REPORT

There was none.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Bacio reported the current balance of the Commission's Charitable Fund is \$1,748.23.

STAFF REPORT

There was none.

INVITED GUEST, COMMANDER JOHN A. FRANKLIN, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Commander John A. Franklin, Sheriff's Department, gave the following report:

- The expansion of the Mira Loma Jail Facility is needed to house the large number of inmates. Local residents have expressed concerns with inmates being released in the area and that prison lights are left on 24 hours a day that are extremely bright.
- The closure of Men's Central Jail will go before the Board of Supervisors in July 2008 and will cost \$672 million.
- The "Environmental Impact Studies" on the new Men's Central Jail will take 18 months.
- The renovated Sybil Brand Institute will have a separate road that does not go through the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Because of overcrowding in jails, inmates are not serving complete sentences. Females serve an average of 10% of their sentences. Males serve an average of 70% of their sentences.

Commissioner Hall joined the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

INVITED GUESTS TO DISCUSS GROUP HOME CLOSURES

Mr. Walter Chan, Contracts Administration, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), gave the following report:

- On August 31, 2007, DCFS released the Foster Family Agencies (FFA)/Group Homes (GH) Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) following a public pre-release in May 2007. Input from interested vendors was incorporated and the new contract term date will begin on November 1, 2008.
- DCFS posted notices that the Department was taking Statements of Qualification (SOQ) bids on their website, which all GH/FFAs are required to register on.
- Although the deadline for SOQ's was on February 29, 2008, the thirty-two (32) Group Homes and seven (7) FFAs scheduled for closure did not submit SOQ responses in time for renewal of their contracts.
- DCFS made the bid process easier this fiscal year by extending the bid period to six months.
- Notices were sent to the agencies inviting them to several conferences with DCFS regarding the renewal process.
- Requirements for an SOQ include insurance documentation, fiscal issues (i.e. existing lawsuits) and standard-meeting requirements.
- The quality of a Group Home does not influence the administration of license renewal. The renewal of GH/FFA contract is not based on quality, but on the bidding process.

Commissioner Cannella stated that the Sybil Brand Commission should have been notified that the DCFS had a new process for renewal of contracts for GH and FFA's.

Mr. Paul McIver, Department of Mental Health (DMH), gave the following report:

- The DMH has RCL-14 children in the San Gabriel Children's Center, which is one of the homes facing closure. Mr. McIver stated he was upset that the DMH was not notified of the conferences regarding the closing of the GH and FFA's.
- The DMH is required to certify the appropriate RCL Level for each child in the event a child has to be placed in an alternate group home.

Mr. Michael Cooper, Probation Department, reported the following:

- The Department will always have beds available for Foster and Group Home runaways.

- DCFS and the Probation Department will work together on finding alternate group homes for the affected children.
- The Probation Department has approximately 117 children in 14 of the 32 group homes facing closure. The Department has scheduled four (4) transitional meetings with half of these homes to discuss the transition process.
- The Probation Department will hold a "Case Management Meeting" to find the most appropriate placement for the children. Several options being discussed are to have children return home to their families, participate in a new "FFA/After Care Program" which reunites the children with their relatives or have the children placed in specialized homes after their school year ends in June-August.
- The "Wraparound Program" at DCFS has been successful and there will be additional beds for Probation children, however the beds are filled quickly.

Ms. Dorothy Channel, Department of Children and Family Services, reported the following:

- Over 140 agencies did apply for a contract in a timely manner.
- A "Wraparound Program" will be put into effect prior to the homes closing. This will ensure the children are transferred to a home that will provide the same level of care the children are currently receiving.
- Approximately 240 group home children will be affected by the closures.
- The group homes and foster family agencies that will be closed between November 1, 2008 and November 1, 2009 can reapply for a new contract in one year.

Ms. Elizabeth Howard, Department of Children and Family Services, reported the following:

- Several group home providers who will be closing on October 31, 2008, have expressed an interest in ensuring that the children are placed appropriately.
- The Department of Children and Family Services will make every attempt to keep siblings together.
- Each group home and foster family agency was made aware of the submission dates and it was posted on the ISD website.
- Group homes and foster family agencies are required to register on the ISD website in order to receive electronic notifications from the Department of Children and Family Services.
- Mailings were sent by First Class Mail to group homes and foster family agencies notifying them of the dates of filing the SOQ's.

- A survey on group home renewals was conducted and many of the homes being closed decided not to renew their contracts because they were Out of County and did not want to continue with DCFS.

On motion of Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Hall, and unanimously carried, the Commission is requesting a status report from the Departments at the next Business Meeting on the closure of thirty-two (32) Group Homes and seven (7) Foster Family Agencies.

On motion of Commissioner Cannella, seconded by Commissioner Hammargren, and unanimously carried, a letter will be drafted to the Board of Supervisors expressing the Commission's concern that the Group Home/FFA contract renewal process does not support the welfare of children.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

FACILITY/GROUP HOME INSPECTION REPORTS FROM APRIL 23, 2008 TO APRIL 29, 2008

Item deferred to May 7, 2008.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA (To be presented and placed on a future agenda)

There were none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Montañó adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice A. Davis
Commission Services Division